

30 November 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Priority National Intelligence Objectives

1. The 24 November draft constitutes the required annual revision of DCID 1/3. A special effort has been made to enhance the meaning of the term priority by eliminating some items and reducing others from Second to Third Priority.

2. The insertion of a new third paragraph in the introduction was made to counteract an existing tendency to claim a first priority collection effort for any item of information which could be related to a first priority subject, regardless of actual need. It was agreed that this tendency is an abuse of the system, but was held that it could not be controlled administratively without some such statement by the USIB as that proposed.

3. It is generally agreed that some restriction on the implementation of Item 1 f, relating to the Soviet space program, is required. To this end, the Chairman of COMINT

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and SIC, representing a majority of the members of their respective committees, strongly desire a change in the language of that item. Their final proposal is as in the foot-note. The Air Force and Joint Staff representatives as strongly hold that the language previously approved by the USIB should be retained, relying upon the new paragraph in the introduction to facilitate administrative control. Since no consensus could be found among the USIB representatives in support of either version, the issue is presented as on Page 4 for USIB resolution. The Board of National Estimates could accept either text.

4. USIB action on Item I f will automatically decide the issue indicated in item II e (p. 6).

5. General Williams intended to present in USIB an extensive and detailed revision of these PNIO's. His general theme is that local aggression and subversion are more likely than Soviet resort to nuclear general war and should therefore receive at least equal emphasis; the general effect of his proposed changes would have been to make almost every

conceivable untoward occurrence a First Priority subject.

This point of view has been presented before, though never with such force. Hitherto, it has always been held that First Priority was properly reserved for the matters now covered there, and that local aggression and subversion were adequately and properly covered in Second and Third Priority.

6. General Willem's proposed changes were considered in detail at a cleanup session and were rejected. We are now informed that he will express his point of view orally at the USIB, but will not present such extensive and detailed changes as he had originally intended. We do not know what substantive changes he may propose, if any.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

Abbot Smith  
Acting Chairman